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SUBJECT: FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11; GSP REVIEW; ARGENTINE PRESIDENT
KIRCHNER'S UPCOMING TRIP TO NEW YORK; BOLIVIA;
CUBA/VENEZUELA/ARGENTINA; 09/11/06; BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend local papers' special supplements cover the fifth anniversary of the September 11 attacks. Other international stories include the impact of the GSP review on Argentina; Argentine President Kirchner's upcoming trip to New York; the situation in Bolivia and its impact on Latin America, particularly on Brazil and Argentina; and Cuba's debt owed to Argentina.

2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "The decadence of the Empire?"

Centrist newspaper "Perfil" carries an opinion piece by Rosendo Fraga, head of Centro de Estudios Nueva Mayoria, who writes (09/109) "The September 11 attacks put in evidence the limits of the US as the only world power.

"The trouble met by the US in Iraq and Afghanistan and the problems it faces in the Middle East, along with Israel, revived opinions that the world's first power may have reached its peak and that these events are marking the beginning of the decline that every empire has suffered in history.

"... What will surely happen with a new US administration, whether Republican or Democratic, is that the country will certainly enter a cycle of greater isolation and that it will get less and less involved in international conflicts. This is why, we should notice what may be a US retreat at the beginning of its decay - which some day will come, but, in my opinion, not yet. However, the 'global war on terrorism' seems to have brought more disadvantages than benefits at an international level."

- "Secrets and lies of the White House"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (09/10) "... The search for Bin Laden reveals the worst side of the Bush administration, with government officials who feed US citizens' fears in order to win the advantage in elections, while they are attempting to disguise their own incompetence during the months that followed the September 11 attacks.

"... The White House is now pressuring the intelligence community and the US Pentagon to focus on Iran, the second member of Bush's 'axis of evil.'"

- "US foreign policy in the shadow of September 11"

Mark Joyce, contributor to liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires

Herald," writes (09/11) "... There is no doubt that the events of September 11, 2001 had a powerful, immediate impact on US foreign policy, giving a sense of direction and purpose to a Bush administration that previously had defined its foreign policy agenda in largely negative, anti-Clintonian terms...

"... The rhetoric of democracy promotion and security planning represented a merger of the two dominant schools of post-Cold War, US foreign policy thinking, as represented by the internationalists and neoconservatives within the Bush administration...

"In place of Communism, Islamic extremism was now installed as the monolithic, global threat against which US foreign policy and the military system must be aligned. But rather than merely containing and deterring the new threat, the US would go on the offensive with both 'hard' and 'soft' power, destroying terrorist cells while eliminating the conditions under which they are able to thrive."

- "Five years after the September 11 attacks"

Muriel Balbi, contributor to business-financial "InfoBae," writes (09/11) "... Five years after the September 11 attacks, the US started the greatest investigation ever launched. However, five years later, only one person has been sentenced - Zacarias Moussaoui.

"The biggest purpose, the capture of Osama bin Laden, dead or alive, was not achieved in spite of the millions of dollars used for military operations and intelligence efforts. The arrests of alleged terrorists were also fruitless...

"The most important military offensive, the so-called 'Enduring Freedom' operation, was a harsh blow to Al Qaeda but it did not dismantle international terrorism.

"... The reduction in popularity ratings was a reflection of

discontent vis-à-vis an unpopular war, whose purposes were worn out with the passing of time..."

- "There is still no evidence on who was behind the attacks"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst of leading "Clarín," writes (09/11) "Contrarily to what critics of President George W. Bush say, the two main questions his administration must still answer about the September 11 attacks are related not to the existence of WMD, which are mentioned as a reason for the invasion of Iraq, or the alleged partnership between Al Qaeda and the Hussein regime.

"Truly enough, Bush has told gigantic lies in relation to these two issues, but the two of them are clouded by the main question - who was responsible for the attacks?

"... No one has ever exhibited a conclusive piece of evidence that Osama bin Laden Al Qaeda planned and executed the first act of war in history against the US on its own territory.

"... There is a second major question... How important were the September 11 attacks for Bush's plans? Ever since the September 11 attacks, he has pleaded for the re-establishment of the 'Imperial Presidency,' which was worn out after the Vietnam War and the downfall of former president Nixon. But this time, the suffocation of freedoms and guarantees threatens to be global."

- "Condoleezza Rice - the US is still 'not completely safe'"

Leading "Clarín" reports (09/11) "US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reiterated that the US is a safer country than before the September 11 attacks, although she admitted that it is not 'completely safe' yet and that it should not cede in the global war on terrorism in Iraq and other places.

"She also insisted that the overthrown Iraqi president Saddam Hussein had ties with Al Qaeda in spite of several reports denying those ties.

"... Rice also acknowledged that the Taliban are 'better organized' in Afghanistan, but she asserted that they do not pose a threat for Afghan President Hamid Karzai."

- "Senators accuse Bush of not telling the truth"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," comments (09/09) "The fifth anniversary of the September 11 attacks has become an election battlefield. Both the party in power and the opposition are using the anniversary to reap benefits."

"Last night, the (US) Senate Intelligence Committee released a report proving that the CIA had no evidence that there were ties between Saddam Hussein and Jordanian terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarwawi and Al Qaeda."

"According to the report, Bush said many times that Saddam had harbored Zarwawi and his followers, to justify the war in Iraq, although the CIA had no evidence of this."

"Democratic Senator Carl Levin said that the new report 'is a devastating sign of the Bush administration's constant, misleading and false attempts to connect Saddam to Al Qaeda and, in this way, justify the invasion and the war in Iraq.'"

- "Taiana will ask that GSP benefits continue for exports to the US"

Eleonora Gosman, on special assignment to Rio de Janeiro for leading "Clarín," comments (09/10) "Argentine FM Jorge Taiana will hold today a key meeting with a powerful USG official, USTR Susan Schwab, who has already said that Argentina and Brazil will likely lose their GSP benefits..."

"Taiana is not ignoring the political aspect of the issue because, according to him, this was the argument used by the Bush administration to 'convince Peru' of the need to sign an FTA with the US."

"During a meeting with 'Clarín', Taiana underscored that he would ask her to keep Argentina under the GSP. However, he said that it only affects 15% of Argentine foreign trade, this is some 600 million dollars, and that within this volume of exports to the US market, only a small amount would be affected..."

"Consulted on the US negative vote on the IDB loan for Argentina,"

Taiana said that it is striking that the vote was negative when the USG could have abstained from voting."

- "Attracting investment, the main purpose of Kirchner's visit to New York"

Walter Curia, columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (09/10) "Promoting investment is the main purpose of President Nestor Kirchner's trip to New York in the framework of his attendance to the 61st UN General Assembly."

"... The visit of the President to New York seems conditioned by two recent events that mark the status of the US-Argentine relationship - first, the USG's decision to remove Argentina from the GSP system..., and, second, the US vote against the IDB granting a loan for the country's satellite development."

"If the removal of GSP has a relative impact and is part of a broader decision by the Bush administration involving other developing countries, the vote against the IDB loan cannot be taken otherwise but as an expression of irritation. Argentina's partnership with President Hugo Chavez and Argentina and Mercosur's vote in favor of Venezuela's entry into the UN Security Council appear as the main reasons for it."

- "Vis-à-vis serious unattended conflicts"

Joaquín Morales Sola, political columnist of daily-of-record "La Nación," comments (09/10) "... Neither Brazil nor Argentina wants Bolivia's secession, regardless of the fact that the area in

conflict is today the second largest energy reserve of the region after Venezuela...

"... Bolivia's secession could end up in a serious arm-wrestling match between Brazil and Argentina due to the control of Bolivian energy resources... The Bolivian conflict could well worsen the Argentine energy crisis.

"... Argentina's neglect of Uruguay is pushing Uruguay to Washington's arms. Tabare Vazquez announced to Lula that Uruguay will start holding negotiations aimed at reaching an FTA with the US. Lula answered that a commercial deal is possible, although not an FTA because it could infringe on Mercosur arrangements. Uruguay is offended with its Mercosur major partners."

13. EDITORIALS

- "Consequences of the 09/11"

An editorial in leading "Clarín" reads (09/11) "... The September 11 attacks against the US made the most powerful country in the world and the entire world take note of the terrorists' colossal ability to damage any point of the world.

"They also changed the US relationship with the international community based on the USG's decision to connect the global fight on terrorism to the invasion and occupation of Iraq in disregard of the UN framework.

"On the other hand, this scenario deepened the divide between the Western and the Arab worlds...

"Five years later, one can observe that the international community continues to face risks of instability and unrest, and that security and peace are jeopardized by terrorists. Extreme inequality and injustice are also a constant source of conflict and violence.

"Also, it became obvious that the way to fight these threats efficiently should be the reinforcement of the tools of democratic countries and free societies, international judicial commitments and consensus among nations."

- "Another present for Fidel"

An editorial in daily-of-record "La Nación" (09/09) "A few days ago, the Argentine Government decided to become indebted in dollars at a rate of 8.4% per year, which is higher than that of the now-cancelled debt owed to the IMF.

"... Some national legislators who make up the so-called Congressional Group for Friendship with Cuba are pushing an initiative for a gigantic write-off on Cuban debt owed to Argentina - nothing less than 75%.

"... Perhaps, the time has come to explore another alternative - to pay off our debt with Venezuela by using the large credit we have

with Cuba. In this way, the Chavez administration could collect the money from Fidel Castro or, if he wants to, Chavez could forgive Castro's debt based on their public friendship..."

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